

CHAPTER TEN

Seek Ye Learning

A human soul without education, Joseph Addison once wrote, is like marble in the quarry, which shows none of its inherent beauties till the skill of the polisher fetches out the colors, makes the surface shine, and discovers every ornamental cloud, spot and vein that runs through the body of it.

The dream of providing this polishing touch of life through good schools was ever-present with the early settlers of Heber City. As detailed in Chapter 6 they built early in their settlement a small, log school and then worked together to provide better one-room schools, then graded schools and finally the educational "star in their crown," the Wasatch High School.

As precious as education was to the early settlers, it still had to take second place to the winning of food from the earth to sustain life. Early educational efforts flourished during winter months when agricultural activity could easily be handled by the "older folks." Spring and summer schooling and learning in the fall was largely behind a plow and in the fields.

Heber's first school, the 20 by 40 foot, one-room building that served also as a Church house and community building, was located on the corner of 3rd North and 2nd West. A fireplace in each end of the building provided the only heat, and students would take turns getting warm as part of the class recited to the teacher and the other half studied around the fires. The building's dirt roof leaked so badly at times that school had to be discontinued while repairs were made.

By 1867 the Utah Territorial Legislature had passed an act that permitted communities, by a majority vote of the taxpayers, to maintain free schools by taxation. Until this time teachers had usually boarded at the homes of pupils and collected salaries in produce. Now, a new era for teachers and school building construction lay ahead.

A one-room rock school building was soon built across the street from the first log school, and then another one-room building, known as the East School, was built at 2nd North and 3rd East, where the First-Sixth Ward Chapel now stands.

Heber's next school building was the old "Sleepy Hollow" school, a one-room rock building in the southwest part of town at 2nd West and 3rd South.

One of the most forward looking steps in education came in 1892 when Henry Aird, a former teacher in the old rock East School, and



A popular school event in 1904 was this Washington Birthday's Parade. The crowd shown here had gathered at the corner of Main and Center Streets in Heber ready to parade through the streets in honor of the day.

then a student and graduate of the University of Utah, advocated the establishment of graded schools. He won the support of many community residents and work began on a two-story eight-room school building, known as the Central School. All elementary pupils of the city attended this Main Street school.

The people of Heber were genuinely proud of their new school, constructed almost entirely of sandstone taken from the Crook quarry in Lake Creek. Elisha Averett was the head stonecutter and cut to a fine precision the stones of the building. The structure faced west, and stones were fitted together in front to form a large arch over the entrance-way. The entrance was large enough to shelter the students in case of storms, and also made a shady playground area on sunny days. The school's main doors were at the rear of this entrance vestibule, and opened into a spacious hall that extended the full length of the building. The stairs to the upper floor were at the north of the hallway in the center of the building. On the landing where the stairs turned was an organ which was played for the students to march to or from classes.

The sound of a bell was the signal for students to get ready for marching, and when a second bell rang, everyone began marching four-abreast, with an arm's length between each file of marchers. The corners had to be turned with precision, and any unruly conduct was quickly detected by the teacher who promptly removed the misbehaving students from the line of march. It was an honor, and usually an award for good

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R. Raymond J. ...
375 East ...
Heber, Utah ...